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**Maritime
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MARITIME SECURITY REPORT

*** November 2000 ***



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PREFACE

The *Maritime Security Report* is an unclassified periodic publication prepared to inform the commercial maritime industry, senior Maritime Administration officials, the Secretary of Transportation's Office of Intelligence and Security, and the Security Subcommittee of the Interagency Committee on the Marine Transportation System. The report focuses on international criminal activity and security issues which pose a threat to U.S. commercial maritime interests and the movement of U.S. civilian cargoes in foreign trade.

The global nature of U.S. trade means that U.S.-flag ocean carriers call on ports in nearly every country, and cargoes owned by U.S. interests may be embarked on ocean vessels of any flag or in any port worldwide. U.S. commercial maritime interests, therefore, can be jeopardized worldwide by a broad range of illicit activities, adversely affecting their competitiveness.

The *Maritime Security Report* is intended to increase awareness of the scope and severity of economic crime affecting U.S. maritime commerce. Increased awareness is a factor in improving port and cargo security in the international maritime trade corridors. The Maritime Administration expects increased awareness to contribute toward deterring criminal exploitation of the maritime transportation system, its users and providers.

The *Maritime Security Report* is produced under the authorization of Margaret D. Blum, Associate Administrator for Port, Intermodal, and Environmental Activities. The information contained in the report is based on our research and analysis of recent, significant developments, and is compiled from commercial sources and U.S. Government reports.

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Previous Issues of the Maritime Security Report

Note: The preceding issue of the *Maritime Security Report* is dated May 2000. Issues previous to that are dated: June 1999, October 1998, October 1997, April 1997, January 1997, September 1996, April 1996, January 1996, and August 1995 (the initial issue of the report). Copies of previous issues are available in printed format or in electronic form. Visit MARAD's web site at <http://www.marad.dot.gov> to view specific editions or for more information.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Colombian Port Security Improvements Are Beginning to Achieve Results in Countering Commercial Maritime Drug Smuggling and to Impact the Transportation Methods Used by Trafficking Organizations

Port and cargo security programs being implemented in Colombia's port facilities, maritime jurisdictions, and the marine intermodal shipping cycle are producing successful results against commercial maritime drug smuggling. Sustaining those improvements may contribute to an effective, long-term attack on commercial maritime drug smuggling via the seaports of Colombia and the Hemisphere.

Recent findings by the U.S. Government's interagency counterdrug analysis process present particular justification for a systemic approach to port security in Colombia in order to sustain and institutionalize improvements on a national basis. The unclassified *1999-Annual Assessment of Cocaine Movement* (March 2000), published by the Office of National Drug Control Policy, attributes Colombia as the source of 90 percent of all cocaine smuggled to world markets, and states that:

- "Maritime conveyances pose the overwhelming threat in the transit of cocaine to world markets", accounting for more than 90 percent of cocaine tonnage smuggled from South America.
- The detected 75 tonnes to Europe "understates the flow of cocaine to non-U.S. destinations because of drug traffickers' reliance on the commercial maritime industry and the difficulty in detecting these shipments." And that "actual cocaine flow to Europe alone is probably as great as 150-200 metric tons."
- "Instead of drug-laden carriers arriving in large ports like Miami or New York, traffickers could be using nontraditional ports along the U.S. east coast and gulf coast."

Implementation of successful port security programs on a national scale in Colombia may be replicated by the countries with which it shares a border -- Panama, Venezuela, Brazil, Peru, and Ecuador -- generating regional international results. The continued initiative and leadership of the Narcotics Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy Bogota, could facilitate the formulation, documentation, and implementation of relevant activities in Colombia over the near term.

***Colombian Port Security Improvements Are Beginning to
Achieve Results in Countering Commercial Maritime Drug Smuggling and
to Impact the Transportation Methods Used by Trafficking Organizations***

President Clinton announced during a press conference held in Cartagena, Colombia, in August 2000, that one of the desired operational outcomes of U.S. counterdrug assistance to Colombia is to “stop drug shipments before they leave Colombia.” The President stated that objectives of U.S. assistance included an effort to “increase the capacity of the Colombian government” to carry out its counterdrug policies. The U.S. and Colombia subsequently signed a major agreement that will assist in implementing different aspects of “Plan Colombia” -- the comprehensive effort designed by Colombian President Andres Pastrana to combat the illicit drug trade in that country.

Port and cargo security programs being implemented in Colombia’s port facilities, maritime jurisdictions, and the marine intermodal shipping cycle are producing successful results against commercial maritime drug smuggling. Sustaining those improvements may contribute to an effective, long-term attack on commercial maritime drug smuggling via the seaports of Colombia and the Hemisphere. A systemic approach to port security may ensure continued improvement in the effectiveness of law enforcement operations and private sector security countermeasures and reduce vulnerabilities to drug smuggling. This would contribute toward constricting the opportunities for the exploitation of commercial maritime transport by drug trafficking organizations.

Port security programs developed and implemented in a cooperative effort involving government, the private sector, and international interests may guide a coordinated and focused strategic response also beneficial to multilateral national security interests. The result may institutionalize port security improvements in Colombia’s marine intermodal shipping cycle and international trade sector. The continued initiative and leadership of the Narcotics Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy Bogota, could facilitate the formulation, documentation, and implementation of necessary activities in Colombia over the near term.

A National Approach to Port Security With International Benefits

International implications are intrinsic to maritime trade and port security approached on a national scale. The security of one country’s seaports has a direct impact on the security of all the seaports with which it trades. This is due to the vulnerabilities of maritime shipping, and the stream of international commerce generally, to exploitation by drug trafficking organizations. Implementation of successful port security programs on a national scale in Colombia may be replicated by the countries with which it shares a border -- Panama, Venezuela, Brazil, Peru, and Ecuador -- generating regional international results.

In a recent public statement on the need for multinational cooperation, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Thomas Pickering said that regional governments are concerned about the expansion of drug trafficking activities by criminal organizations into Panama, Venezuela, Brazil, Peru, and Ecuador. Pickering said, "increasingly, our regional partners recognize that the crisis in Colombia represents an Andean and even a hemispheric problem in which they have a direct and immediate stake." Pickering said this view was affirmed in the South American Presidents' summit statement, released September 1, 2000. Colombian President Pastrana spoke before an international business forum in New York on September 8 and cited the language from the summit statement: "Narcotrafficking poses the greatest obstacle to development, prosperity, and peace in Latin America," and that it "threatens the integrity of the political, economic, and social structures of all Latin American countries."

Unintended Consequences: Cross-Border Displacement. Several port and cargo security initiatives have been conducted in Colombia during the past two years, assisted by the Narcotics Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy Bogota. They have successfully impacted commercial maritime drug smuggling activity, which is reflected in the current patterns of departure points of detected cocaine shipments and the methods of transport. The changes are evident in, for example, the prevalent use of multimodal maritime conveyances to transport cocaine shipments and increased use of countries neighboring Colombia as initial export points for smuggling via commercial and noncommercial vessels. Multilateral implementation of enhanced port security measures initiated in Colombia, may contribute to improving regional capabilities to contain the already prevalent cross-border displacement of smuggling not only drugs, but weapons and contraband merchandise. It may also assist the control of legitimate commercial chemicals shipments to prevent their diversion by drug traffickers.

During Congressional testimony in March 2000, the Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM), which has as its area of responsibility the Caribbean and Latin America, said "countries of the region must cooperate to develop a common strategy and coordinate their actions against drug traffickers." General Charles Wilhelm, then SOUTHCOM commander, added that "a collective regional response is required to provide effective border security and to expand and sustain the impressive counterdrug results achieved by Peru and Bolivia."

Commercial maritime drug smuggling is a key factor contributing to the growth of the illegal drug industry in Colombia. Implementation of Colombian port security programs in neighboring countries may enhance cooperation and coordination ultimately on a regional scale and add synergies to recent successful results. National port security programs could function as a crucial component of border security and play a significant role in the broader regional counterdrug effort. A successful outcome could build on the results of ongoing initiatives and recent commitments by Colombia, the United States, and other member countries of the Organization of American States.

The acting U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs, Peter Romero, addressed the annual Americas Conference on September 15, 2000, and spoke on U.S. policy in the Western Hemisphere. On the importance of U.S. counterdrug assistance in the Hemisphere in 2001 and subsequent years, Romero stressed the importance of continued support to Colombia. He said the U.S. Government, "must continue to support Colombia both in the implementation of and follow-up to the supplemental aid package and Plan Colombia." And, "...address any possible spillover effects on Colombia's neighbors emanating from the success of Plan Colombia."

The Maritime Drug Smuggling Threat from Colombia

Colombia is the world's largest producer and distributor of cocaine and remains at the center of the international cocaine trade, with drugs flowing out of the country at a stable and constant rate. Cocaine shipments transported out of Colombia by commercial maritime vessels occur primarily in multi-ton loads destined for Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean, typically transiting to the United States but also to European ports, according to the U.S. Department of State's *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report - 2000*.

Findings by the U.S. Government's interagency counterdrug analysis process were published by the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) in the *1999 Annual Assessment of Cocaine Movement (AACM; March 2000)*, an unclassified report. The AACM attributes Colombia as the source of 90 percent of all cocaine smuggled to world markets. The report states that "maritime conveyances pose the overwhelming threat in the transit of cocaine to world markets", accounting for more than 90 percent of cocaine tonnage smuggled from South America.

Drug shipments in commercial maritime cargoes complicate smuggling investigations by obfuscating the links between the illicit consignment and the traffickers. As maritime container traffic volumes increase, detection of a narcotics shipment concealed in commercial cargo resulting from random inspections becomes statistically less probable. The volume of legitimate maritime commercial trade through the ports of Colombia, and other source and transit countries, is growing annually at a substantial rate. This compounds the difficulty in developing explicit, actionable, and predictive intelligence for interdicting commercial maritime cocaine shipments.

Undetected Cocaine Tonnage. According to the AACM, 587 metric tons (tonnes) of cocaine were detected departing South America for global markets in 1999, of which 90 percent originated in Colombia. Of those detected movements, 512 tonnes were bound potentially for the United States. The remaining 75 detected tonnes were determined to be destined for other world markets, particularly Europe. However, the report adds, "this understates the flow of cocaine to non-U.S. destinations because of drug

traffickers' reliance on the commercial maritime industry and the difficulty in detecting these shipments. Furthermore, analysts agree that actual cocaine flow to Europe alone is probably as great as 150-200 metric tons."

Heroin Smuggling from Colombia. Colombia is also a significant supplier of heroin to the United States. According to an unclassified U.S. Government report, *Global Heroin Threat to the United States* (July 2000), produced by an interagency counterdrug working group, Colombia has, since the mid-1990s, been the single largest source of heroin supplied to the U.S. market. In 1999, Colombia's potential heroin production was estimated at about eight metric tons, nearly all of which went to the United States, according to the report. The report cites data from drug seizures in commercial freight containers that indicate some cocaine trafficking groups may be increasing their involvement in the heroin trade. The methods used by Asian heroin trafficking organizations -- longer established than those in Colombia -- may be indicative of future patterns in the Western Hemisphere. The report states that most Southeast Asian heroin is exported from that region to international markets by maritime transportation and containers originating in or transiting through one or more of East Asia's major seaports.

The Threat to U.S. Atlantic and Gulf Ports. The increased threat to commercial maritime transportation is also evident in the dramatic decrease in detected cocaine consignments smuggled to the U.S. in direct shipments from originating seaports. According to the AACM, indications point to a possible shift in the destinations of commercial maritime cocaine deliveries to the U.S. The AACM states that: "Instead of drug-laden carriers arriving in large ports like Miami or New York, traffickers could be using nontraditional ports along the U.S. east coast and gulf coast."

Puerto Rico - Mainland U.S. Route: A Unique Vulnerability. The AACM reports that Puerto Rico remains one of two principal Caribbean destinations for cocaine shipments, along with Haiti. Puerto Rico was a strategic entry point for cocaine movements into the U.S. mainland in 1999, accounting for 56 tonnes, according to the AACM. Oceangoing speed boats (*go-fasts*) from Colombia's north coast and Venezuela comprised nearly all of the movements to the island. Well over this amount was likely moved to Puerto Rico for subsequent distribution in the U.S. Supporting that assertion, the AACM states that of the 220 tonnes of cocaine shipped via the Caribbean Corridor, some 199 tonnes were potentially smuggled into the U.S. While inbound deliveries of cocaine arrive in Puerto Rico mainly by noncommercial maritime vessels, much of the outbound cocaine is probably smuggled through Puerto Rico's ports concealed in commercial cargo.

Puerto Rico's status as a commonwealth associated with the U.S. means that commercial freight shipped from the island to the U.S. mainland is regarded as domestic cargo. Therefore, it is not subjected to the type of routine scrutiny applied to imported foreign trade by the U.S. Customs Service (USCS). Drug trafficking

organizations exploit these circumstances in an attempt to lower their risk by smuggling significant tonnage of cocaine into Puerto Rico, intended mostly for subsequent movement to the U.S. mainland.

The high annual volume of container traffic through Puerto Rico's ports further conceals the activities of drug smugglers. In recent years, the figure has typically exceeded two million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) -- moved primarily through the Port of San Juan. About three quarters of this volume is traded with mainland-U.S. ports, mostly in Florida. In order to address these and other aspects of the drug trafficking problem affecting the island, Puerto Rico has for several years been designated by ONDCP as a High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area. As a result, Puerto Rico is a focus of an exceptional degree of U.S. counterdrug resources.

Diversified Smuggling Routes and Destinations. Cocaine trafficking organizations are now smaller, more adaptable, and more mobile than traditional cartels, according to the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). Their smuggling organizations operate with more decentralized independence than in the past and have achieved an effective and diverse mix of transportation capabilities. It is common for them to combine various modes of commercial and noncommercial maritime transport into flexible and seamless operations. These movements may involve rendezvousing noncommercial vessels with a commercial freighter loitering at sea or at a position along a secluded segment of coastline.

Drug trafficking organizations exploit Colombia's multiple borders, using departure points in adjacent countries in an attempt to obfuscate the origins and destinations of their shipments. Further concealment is achieved by permeating the flows of legitimate commercial maritime cargo carried in ships departing the seaports of countries adjacent to Colombia. Subsequently, these shipments are transported primarily to the U.S. and Europe. Cocaine shipments concealed in commercial maritime conveyances are more at risk of detection in arrival ports if subjected to priority-country inspections by customs. In order to avoid this risk, smuggling attempts often include multiple transshipment points along transit routes.

The AACM states that: "Although cocaine flow and production data suggest that some 90 percent of the cocaine moving to world markets is produced in Colombia, some of the cocaine transits other South American countries, notably Venezuela, Ecuador, and Brazil." Consequently, for example, cocaine "shipments departing Ecuador raised less suspicion at arrival destinations than those departing Colombia and had ready access to major shipping lanes."

Colombia's Complex Transport Geography: A Smuggler's Advantage. Colombia's ports are widely dispersed in relatively isolated locations, and have trade linkages by inland waterway as well as coastal routes, which compound the complexity of interdiction efforts. Drug trafficking organizations take advantage of these circumstances in their

attempts to evade interdiction efforts in maritime and inland waterway jurisdictions. The following examples illustrate the need for a national approach to port security in Colombia's marine intermodal transport system.

The ports of San Andres and Leticia are low-capacity general cargo ports, although having provincial importance. The Port of San Andres is located on an island by the same name in the Caribbean Sea, 385 nautical miles west-northwest of Cartagena. The Port of Leticia is situated on the Amazon River at the most southeastern extremity of Colombia's international boundaries. The Port of Barranquilla, situated on the Magdalena River 22 kilometers upstream from where it empties into the Caribbean Sea, has trade linkages by barge traffic as far as 815 kilometers into Colombia's interior. As a result, the Port of Barranquilla trades 250,000 tons of cargo per year by river with the Bogota-Bucaramanga-Medellin economic triangle, which is difficult to access from Colombia's north coast by road or rail transportation.

Avoiding Colombian Port Security. Improved port security can be expected to cause some displacement of drug shipments into the flow of commerce moving through ports with less effective security. Increased use of noncommercial forms of maritime transportation is also a probable consequence of improved port security. Port security programs that are integrated into the activities of other border control programs, such as those designed for interdicting noncommercial maritime drug smuggling attempts, may prove to be the most effective. For example, a two-year investigation by U.S. law enforcement agencies and foreign counterparts, known as "Operation Journey," concluded in August 2000. The investigation has increased awareness of the maritime smuggling methods in use by cocaine trafficking organizations. It is also illustrative of the successful results now being achieved by enhanced port security measures in Colombia.

Operation Journey included in the seizure of nearly 25 tons of cocaine through a coordinated multinational law enforcement operation and the dismantling of a Colombian drug trafficking organization responsible for smuggling cocaine by maritime conveyance into Europe and the United States. According to a press release by DEA, Joint Interagency Task Force - East, and USCS, the drug smuggling organization combined commercial maritime conveyances and oceangoing *go-fast* boats which hauled loads of cocaine offshore to waiting freighters. Typically, these shipments were exported from the Orinoco River delta on Venezuela's northeast coast. A fleet of more than eight commercial ships -- of Colombian, Greek, and other registries -- capable of transporting cocaine shipments anywhere in the world were used. Offshore of their intended destinations in Europe and the United States, the commercial ships rendezvoused with *go-fast* boats and other types of vessels where the cocaine was off-loaded and ferried to locations ashore.

Maritime Drug Interdiction: U.S. Roles. Maritime interdiction is carried out at sea or in port in the six million square miles of the Caribbean Sea, Gulf of Mexico, and Eastern

Pacific Ocean which comprise the maritime counterdrug transit zone -- a task led by the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG). Maritime interdiction consists of surveillance and apprehension. This includes detecting and intercepting suspected smugglers, searching cargoes, seizing contraband, arresting suspects and confiscating their equipment. Large volumes of vessel traffic of all types in, for example, the Caribbean Sea severely complicates efforts to interdict smuggling via maritime conveyance.

Key U.S. agencies involved in implementing the interdiction strategy in Latin America and the Caribbean includes the following. The Commandant of the USCG is designated as the U.S. Interdiction Coordinator, overseeing both the surveillance and apprehension aspects of the interdiction strategy. Maritime apprehension in the transit zones is led by USCG but carried out jointly with USCS. The surveillance mission in the interdiction strategy is led by the Department of Defense through organizations such as SOUTHCOM and the Joint Interagency Task Force-East. The principal responsibility for the source-country focus is led jointly by Department of State, Drug Enforcement Administration, USCG, and USCS. On the policy front, the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) coordinates the international and domestic programs and policies of all U.S. Government agencies engaged in drug control activities. ONDCP is also responsible for developing an annual national drug control strategy and budget.

Port Security in Colombian Ports Since Privatization in 1994

The principal ports of Colombia are Barranquilla, Santa Marta, and Cartagena on the Caribbean coast and Buenaventura and Tumaco on the Pacific coast. The private sector operates these ports (e.g., Sociedad Portuaria Regional de Cartagena). The regional Sociedad Portuarias pay concessionaire fees to the government for the use of port infrastructures. The Colombian government retains a national coordinating role through the office of the Superintendency of Ports, headquartered in Bogota. There are nearly 50 additional small ports in Colombia, not included in this administrative arrangement, that are situated on the Pacific and Caribbean coasts and along the navigable segments of the country's extensive inland waterway system.

Colombian ports have experienced rapid increases in container traffic volumes in recent years. They are striving to meet the pressing demands of commercial sector just-in-time inventory requirements. They place a high priority on avoiding port congestion and on the expeditious handling of their growing container throughput. Achieving those conditions was an impetus for Colombia's port privatization initiative, legislatively enacted in 1991, which went into effect in 1994.

The port privatization act provided for the dissolution of the governmental national port agency, Puertos de Colombia (COLPUERTOS). It transferred control of port facilities from federal to the sociedades portuarias (quasi-public port corporations), which consist

of operators, agents, and municipalities, in some cases. Private sector companies were permitted to build and maintain marine terminals for handling their own cargoes. Bonded customs warehouses have been privatized as well.

By 1995, major reductions in port services tariffs and significant reductions in the time required to load and unload ships were achieved. Container handling rates of 30 TEUs per hour were attained and the total tonnage of cargo off-loaded daily was doubled. Port labor forces were also reduced, including the number of security guards, which at Cartagena dropped from 180 to less than 50 on staff. Commercial maritime drug smuggling from Colombian ports also became increasingly prevalent.

Drugs in Commercial Maritime Cargo. The commercial efficiencies achieved in Colombian ports by 1995 were also being exploited by cocaine trafficking organizations. That year, DEA reported that containerized and bulk maritime cargo had become an effective method used by Colombian traffickers to smuggle multi-ton quantities of cocaine into the United States and Europe. The DEA report stated that cocaine was being moved through the ports of Barranquilla, Buenaventura, Cartagena, Santa Marta, and Tumaco secreted into the false bottoms and walls of containers, concealed in perishable cargoes, and hidden in commercial products. At that time, major U.S. ports of entry for cocaine were identified as Houston, Los Angeles, New York, and Miami. In Western Europe, the seaports of Amsterdam, Barcelona, and Hamburg were considered key entry points.

Leadership by U.S. Embassy Bogota. The U.S. Embassy in Bogota, through its Narcotics Affairs Section (NAS-Bogota), has provided assistance to enhance government and private sector cooperation intended to improve cargo security in Colombia's ports. The embassy was instrumental, for example, in obtaining local private sector commitment to provide \$1.5 million per year for the foreseeable future to fund 100 specially trained narcotics police units. According to the U.S. Department of State, these police carry out inspection and interdiction operations at the ports.

According to NAS-Bogota and USCS, Colombia has made significant progress in port security operations, which has been most evident at the Port of Cartagena. This has been accomplished through enhanced security practices enabled by government and private sector cooperation. Measures include installation of sophisticated intelligent terminal technology systems for tracking vessel movements, monitoring the flow of cargo, and scrutinizing document transactions. Successful results are also attributed to the inclusion of incentives for private industry interests such as manufacturers, exporters, importers, and transporters to engage in more self-policing.

A maritime traffic control system has recently begun operation to serve the ports of Barranquilla, Cartagena, and Buenaventura and their approaches. The vessel tracking radar system is considered an important tool for countering drug and contraband smuggling. The information it generates is available to the Colombian navy, national

police, and coast guard. The current system has an operating radius of 48 nautical miles. A future system, being considered as second-phase implementation, will include extended radar coverage capable of conducting ocean surveillance.

Port Security Improvements Recognized by WCO. Delegates representing shipowners, ship managers, insurers, and European customs administrations met at the World Customs Organization (WCO) in February 2000 to address the many challenges presented by commercial maritime drug smuggling. The WCO attributed the recent effectiveness of port security measures in Colombia, particularly at the Port of Cartagena, to a decrease in commercial maritime drug seizures in the country's ports. The WCO also cited an increase in drug smuggling movements diverted to ports having a lesser degree of security than the Port of Cartagena.

Countering the Smuggling of Contraband Merchandise. Colombia's Caribbean ports are, reportedly, the main points of entry for smuggling of imported contraband merchandise into the country. This illegal trade also enables organized crime groups to conduct fraudulent transactions with front companies to penetrate legitimate commercial markets and helps camouflage their use of international maritime trade for drug smuggling. Contraband merchandise shipments are often moved through third countries and via foreign trade zones in, for example, Panama, Aruba, and the Colombian island of San Andres. This form of smuggling has been a large-scale problem in Colombia, where it is also increasingly used by drug trafficking organizations to launder their illegal profits.

In August 2000, the governments of Colombia and the U.S. signed an agreement to combat the illegal trade in contraband merchandise. Intended measures include the exchange of information on, for example, Colombia's legitimate import records for collation with shipping manifests for products exported from the U.S. to Colombia. Goods not arriving for declaration through the Colombian customs service would be considered contraband.

Colombian Private Sector: Committed to Best Practices. In late 1998, during a press conference in Washington, D.C., Colombia's transport minister expressed his government's intent to complete a strategy for controlling port infrastructure and maritime transport in order to prevent their use for illegal purposes. The transport minister referred to plans in progress involving the Government of Colombia, the country's port operators and concessionaires that administer ports, ocean carriers, and the U.S. Government. Key examples of successful programs now available to provide strong foundations for a national approach to port security in Colombia is the Business Anti-Smuggling Coalition and the Americas Anti-Smuggling Initiative.

Business Anti-Smuggling Coalition. The Business Anti-Smuggling Coalition (BASC) commenced in Colombia in 1997 through a bilateral agreement with its transport ministry and the USCS and was supported by Colombian President Pastrana. The

BASC program, developed by USCS in 1996, was designed as an initiative led by the private sector to address security weaknesses in the intermodal logistic chain. BASC objectives target primarily drug smuggling conspiracies that exploit the commercial shipping cycle. The rigorous scrutiny of shipping transactions and the practice of due diligence by BASC members can also benefit efforts to reduce the trade and illegal importation of U.S. products into Colombia.

The effectiveness of BASC relies on forging alliances between its members, which are expected to set and observe self-imposed security standards in order to develop a preventive culture along the entire intermodal supply chain. The WCO recently cited BASC program practices as instrumental to the Port of Cartagena's success in countering drug smuggling in commercial cargo. The WCO has asked its members to consider other ports where BASC could be initiated.

Measures reputedly employed by Colombian BASC members include, for example, tracking containers trucked from Cali to the Port of Buenaventura by Global Positioning System (GPS) technology. Drivers report at five control points along the four-hour route. If elapsed transit time takes longer than that, suspicion prevails and the contents of the entire container must be unloaded and examined. In port, it must be verified that the ship waiting to carry the delivered container is free of hull attachments, in which drugs could be hidden during at least a portion of the ocean voyage.

The BASC program reflects a new consciousness among private sector operators that drug and contraband smuggling can have destructive effects on commercial and political relations between nations. The BASC program is a component of the USCS regional Americas Counter-Smuggling Initiative, along with its longstanding Sea Carrier Initiative Program (SCIP) designed to improve vessel security countermeasures and a similar land carrier program.

The Port of Cartagena was the first to establish a BASC chapter and work cooperatively with USCS to ensure the program's effectiveness. Some 50 different ocean carriers reportedly call at the Port of Cartagena. Other Colombian ports benefiting from BASC chapters include Barranquilla, Santa Marta, and Buenaventura. Colombian firms certified by BASC reportedly number about 50, located mostly in duty-free foreign trade zones. Another 350 companies are working toward certification.

Requirements for BASC certification include that companies pay for a security audit by a specialist service nominated by the BASC board of directors. The types of firms participating are manufacturers, transport companies, and exporters. Colombian BASC members trading with participating firms in Mexico, Venezuela, Ecuador, and Peru during 2000, have reported satisfactory results in improving security of shipments at their origin. During 2000, Colombia's Foreign Commerce Ministry reportedly advanced overtures with the governments of Mexico, Canada, and France to establish a BASC cooperative agreement similar to that with the United States.

Cooperation in the Americas Counter-Smuggling Initiative. Colombia has also been a key partner in the USCS' Americas Counter-Smuggling Initiative (ACSI). This is a regional effort established in 1996 to build cooperative partnerships with private industry and government in Central and South America. ACSI incorporates BASC and SCIP into an expanded counterdrug security program to prevent smuggling in commercial cargo and improve counterdrug interdiction in the Western Hemisphere. In addition to Colombia, other countries in which USCS plans to advance ACSI include Venezuela, Peru, Ecuador, Panama, Costa Rica, and Mexico. In the last several years, the vast majority of drug seizures by USCS at U.S. ports of entry were shipments originating from these seven countries.

Growth in Commercial Maritime Trade -- Also Smuggling Opportunities

The volume of maritime container trades through Colombian, other Latin American, and world ports, in general, posted significant increases in recent years. This growth trend is forecasted to continue beyond 2000. These trends increase the potential opportunities for drug trafficking organizations to conceal cocaine or heroin in commercial maritime cargo and statistically lower the odds of detecting such shipments smuggled to world markets. (See Appendix 1 for world container-port volumes.)

The forecasted growth in the volume of freight, particularly containerized cargoes, traded by South American countries will provide increasing opportunities for drug trafficking organizations to smuggle shipments. A recent report by the Latin American Integration Association (LAIA) measured first-quarter 2000 trade performances and found that Colombia experienced growth in its intra-regional exports of more than 32 percent and in its worldwide export trades by nearly 30 percent since 1999. LAIA membership includes Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay -- its seven top economic performers -- as well as Bolivia, Cuba, Ecuador, Paraguay, and Venezuela.

Colombia's aggregated trade growth rate was the highest among LAIA members, followed by Peru which increased exports to association members by nearly 30 percent and by more than 14 percent to rest of the world. LAIA's group of seven top economies increased combined exports by a rate of 22.7 percent, and their imports from within the region rose 26.5 percent. Imports from the rest of the world increased nearly 19 percent.

Colombian Ports' Container Volume Growing Rapidly. The American Association of Port Authorities (AAPA) reports that in 1998, Colombian ports handled a total of 685,197 TEUs, an increase of nearly 22 percent from 1997. Figures for individual Colombian ports in 1998 (representing total TEU throughput and percentage increase from the previous year) are as follows: Cartagena - 277,686 (20.3 percent); Buenaventura - 247,653 (18.2 percent); Santa Marta - 59,670 (41.8 percent); and

Barranquilla - 52,344 (9.4 percent). Among Latin American ports' TEU throughput volume in 1998, Cartagena ranked 11th and Buenaventura ranked 14th. The total volume of container traffic for ports of Central and South America in 1998 was more than 9.3 million TEUs, an increase from 1997 of nearly 16 percent.

Freight containers provide drug smugglers with certain logistical advantages not provided when other categories of freight are used to conceal drug shipments. According to the *Report of the Interagency Commission on Crime and Security in U.S. Seaports*, smugglers need only a relatively small degree of intransit control in order to retrieve drug consignments concealed in containerized maritime freight. By contrast, access to drug shipments concealed in dry or liquid bulk cargoes requires a greater degree of control in port. (The Commission report was released in September 2000 by the White House).

U.S. Progress in Port Security

The following initiatives have produced results and documentation that are essential to national port security planning. These initiatives have advanced the mechanisms of engagement among U.S. Government agencies on national and international port security issues. The U.S. experience gained from these initiatives may be useful to development of a national approach to port security in Colombia or other countries.

Interagency Commission on Crime & Security in U.S. Seaports Report - 2000. As a federal initiative in the United States, President Clinton established the Interagency Commission on Crime and Security in U.S. Seaports in April 1999. The Commission was tasked with conducting a 12-month examination of the critical concerns of crime and security affecting the country's maritime trade, including the international implications, and report its findings to the White House. The Commission's report was released by the White House in September 2000.

The Administrator of the U.S. Maritime Administration, Clyde J. Hart, Jr., served as one of the Commission's Co-Chairs --- along with the Commissioner of the Customs Service and the Deputy Attorney General for the Criminal Division. The insights from Hart's work on this Commission have reinforced the U.S. Maritime Administration's (MARAD) long standing position that improved security in the world seaports is a key to reducing drug smuggling and criminal exploitation of the international maritime trade corridors.

The Commission's report contains findings that would be of value to Colombia or any other country, and are relevant to the process of developing a national approach to port security. The Commission report is the result of a comprehensive study of the nature and extent of crime in U.S. seaports and the state of security in those seaports. The

study includes a review of the ways in which Federal, state and local governments are responding to the problem, along with recommendations for improving law enforcement and crime prevention.

The report reflects Commission views that seaports are a key component of the U.S. national Marine Transportation System, and that they serve as major gateways for international commerce. As barriers to trade and travel are reduced and volumes of international cargo and passengers continue to grow, opportunities increase for criminals to exploit or disrupt maritime commerce. It is thus essential that effective security and border control measures be maintained to thwart criminals seeking to use the nation's seaports for terrorism, fraud, theft, or smuggling of illegal drugs, migrants, weapons and other contraband. The report can be found on the Commission's website (www.seaportcommission.gov in Current News).

MARAD Report to SOUTHCOM: Peru National Port Security Project. In mid-2000, MARAD participated in the planning and execution of an interagency project which conducted port security assessments of Peruvian ports and produced a report useful to the Government of Peru. The Government of Peru had expressed interest in a national port security strategic plan and requested the assistance through the U.S. Embassy-Lima. The project was conducted as part of the U.S. Embassy-Lima's counterdrug plan for implementing national strategies at the host-nation level, which was led by the embassy Narcotics Affairs Section. The U.S. Southern Command organized the U.S. interagency team which executed the project requirements. In addition to the U.S. agencies mentioned above, the project team also included representatives of the Customs Service, Coast Guard, Drug Enforcement Administration, and the Port of Los Angeles Police Department.

Marine Transportation System Task Force Report - 1999. The Marine Transportation System (MTS) Task Force was a collaborative public/private sector effort led by MARAD and the Coast Guard to examine a comprehensive range of marine transportation issues, including port security. Following months of field outreach, including a national conference held in November 1998, information resulting from the Task Force's work was evaluated and produced into a report to Congress titled *An Assessment of the U.S. Marine Transportation System*. The report was published in September 1999. It can be found on MARAD's website (www.marad.dot.gov).

Contained in the MTS Task Force report were recommendations, including those pertaining to port security. Of specific relevance to this report is the MTS Task Force recommendation to strengthen international cooperation through a collaborative effort to develop a strategy and process for advancing U.S. operating guidelines and minimum security standards on an international basis. The Security Subcommittee of the Interagency Committee on MTS was established in August 2000. It has begun addressing the Task Force recommendations for implementing improvements in the U.S. marine transportation system.

Report by the Council on Foreign Relations. In early 1999, MARAD began a port security research project involving the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR). A report was prepared for MARAD by Dr. Stephen E. Flynn, Senior Fellow with the National Security Program at CFR, titled *Toward an Inter-American Port and Trade Security Strategy*. This report is the final product of an FY2000 project designed and coordinated by Dr. Flynn as an activity of MARAD's Port and Cargo Security Program, for which MARAD provided planning, direction, requirements, and funding for the research and study group activities.

The project consisted of the following elements: (1) focus group sessions with U.S. and foreign senior government officials and private sector experts convened by CFR in the U.S., Guatemala, and Trinidad; (2) a presentation to the Organization of American States' Technical Advisory Group on Port Security of the Inter-American Committee on Ports; and (3) a report on the findings from those events and associated research. The following issues reflect the project's key findings:

Awareness of the problem and its consequences need elevation among governmental and regional officials, business leaders, relevant academics and non-governmental activists, and the public at large. Hemispheric organizations are effective venues in which to discuss vulnerabilities, identify *best practices*, and build and sustain working relationships between security officials from industry and government. Open source publications which facilitate the distribution of unclassified information to the maritime industry on a hemispheric scale are essential tools.

Port security initiatives must be harmonized throughout the inter-American region. National port security must be accompanied by commensurate efforts to improve security in neighboring countries. Otherwise, the more security-conscious state will experience a negative impact on its competitiveness, and the locus of the security risk will simply shift across adjacent borders beyond the control of the more effective security measures. In addition, efforts to improve security at the border entry points require that parallel security efforts be undertaken in the rest of the transportation and logistics network. If security improvements are limited only to the ports, displacement of illicit activities will occur, either across borders or into other transportation and logistics transaction points of the intermodal shipping cycle. Ultimately, a comprehensive and layered system of countermeasures is required.

Monitoring capacity of international trade flows by appropriate authorities must improve. New technologies hold a potential of improving the transparency of international cargo flows and passenger movements, improving results in two crucial aspects: trade facilitation and law enforcement effectiveness.

Dr. Flynn directs a major CFR Studies Program project on "Globalization and the Future of Border Control." Since June 1999, he has been on leave from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy where he is an Associate Professor of International Relations on the Permanent Commissioned Teaching Staff and holds the rank of Commander.

Trade facilitation benefits would enable cargo and passenger manifests to be inspected well in advance of arrival. Freight flows considered to be not suspect could be given pre-arrival clearance without delay at the port of entry -- facilitating the compliant and legitimate majority of port users -- and the avoidance of unnecessary examination delays, charges, or damages. Improved system transparency would dissolve some of the opacity, or *shadows*, in transaction data that is endemic in legitimate trade flows, behind which illicit activities can be concealed.

Law enforcement effectiveness could be improved. Suspect shipments could be more easily recognized and the number of potential targets reduced, improving the predictive and actionable qualities of intelligence, thus increasing targeting accuracy. The efficiencies of inbound and outbound inspection operations for conducting intensive examinations could be improved, resulting in higher interdiction success rates. Also, improved transparency may help deter crime and lower the risk of criminal exploitation in legitimate flows of commerce.

National port security strategy must support the need to move goods and people. Any security strategy initiative that is perceived as compromising the competitive position of the private sector will be met with substantial resistance. Accordingly, it will be essential to identify appropriate incentives, such as expedited (*fast-lane*) clearance, that can be extended to, for example -- carriers, manufacturers, freight forwarders, importers, and exporters -- in return for their consistent compliance with regulatory, enforcement, and security requirements.

Providing the resources and expertise to ensure there is no national "weak link." A hemispheric system of port security strategies must suit the sovereign requirements of individual states while at the same time achieving a common standard of *best practices*. The member countries of the OAS and European Community, the World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank and other appropriate organizations must be mobilized to provide for the resource needs of states who are willing, but presently unable, to become active partners in a hemispheric system of national port security strategies.

COMMENT: U.S. Assistance to Plan Colombia. The White House and U.S. Department of State's Bureau for Western Hemisphere Affairs have explained that the Government of Colombia developed "Plan Colombia" as an integrated strategy to meet the most pressing challenges confronting Colombia today. Those challenges are promoting the peace process, combating the narcotics industry, reviving the Colombian economy, and strengthening the democratic pillars of Colombian society. U.S. support of "Plan Colombia" consists of several sections, including one intended to improve Colombia's governing capacity, which contains a component of funded law enforcement program assistance.

The increased U.S. assistance for Colombia provided in the Emergency Supplemental Act, as enacted in the Military Construction Appropriations Act of 2001, focuses on counterdrug programs including an emphasis on increased interdiction efforts. Assistance to this sector provides funding to enhance U.S. and Colombian narcotics interdiction efforts. Funded U.S. assistance includes activities relevant to port security, and is intended for Colombia's riverine interdiction program and maritime counternarcotics intelligence infrastructures. The assistance also includes interdiction programs in Bolivia and Ecuador, as well as other countries of South and Central America and the Caribbean.

Maritime Enforcement and Port Security. The component within this funding package relevant to port security is identified as Maritime Enforcement and Port Security, for which funding is allocated. It is intended to support and provide training assistance for a comprehensive maritime and port security program, according to the Fact Sheet on United States Support for Colombia, Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, U.S. Department of State. The Maritime Enforcement and Port Security component of the planned U.S. assistance to Colombia provides an opportunity to institutionalize and sustain the countermeasures and port security programs already producing successful results against commercial maritime drug smuggling. Such impetus may add synergies to those activities and contribute to an effective, long-term attack on commercial maritime drug smuggling via the seaports of Colombia and the Hemisphere.

Implementation of successful port security programs on a national scale in Colombia may be replicated by the countries with which it shares a border -- Panama, Venezuela, Brazil, Peru, and Ecuador -- generating regional international results. Essential to that outcome is the continued initiative and leadership of the Narcotics Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy Bogota, which could facilitate the formulation, documentation, and implementation of relevant activities in Colombia over the near term.

Appendix 1

World Container-Port Volume Trending Upward

Growth trends in global maritime container traffic indicate increasing volumes. Thus, drug smugglers are provided with statistically lower risk associated with concealed shipments in mode of conveyance. During 1999, world ports' container throughput increased nearly 8 percent to about 201 million twenty-foot-equivalent units (TEUs), surpassing 200 million units for the first time, according to *Drewry Container Market Quarterly* published by London-based Drewry Shipping Consultants, Ltd (*American Shipper*, Jul 2000). The Latin America region container volume reached nearly 14.7 million TEUs in 1999, an increase of 7.7 percent from the previous year. The report by Drewry forecasts a continued trend toward containerized general cargo traffic, which represented 53.7 percent of the one billion metric tons of annual world general cargo trade in 1999 and may eventually capture 65 percent of market share. Drewry forecasts world port container volume will increase an additional 7 percent during 2000 and 8 percent in 2001.

Drewry explains those figures for world port activity to include the movement of empty containers as well as transshipment moves, for which each loading and discharge moves in the handling of a container shipment is counted. During 1999, empty containers comprised 20.5 percent of movements (41 million TEU), according to Drewry which estimates that the 201 million TEU in-port container moves are equivalent to 61 million loaded TEUs carried on ships.

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